

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7183

NODIS CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS-8

TAGS: PGOV, US, KS

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FONMIN RE KIM DONG JO

REF: STATE 205730

1. MY MEETING WITH FONMIN PARK TONG JIN AUGUST 15 WENT ABOUT AS EXPECTED. HE DID NOT DISPUTE THE NEED FOR A "CLARIFICATION" PROCESS BUT SAID THE ROKG WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN KIM DONG JO'S APPROVAL BEFORE ACCEPTING THE QUESTIONNAIRES FROM ME. HE PROMISED THEY WOULD DO THIS WITHIN "THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS".

2. DURING THE VERY REPITITIVE CONVERSATION, I HEAVILY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROKG'S DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE KIM DONG JO TO RESPOND IN A HELPFUL MANNER. I SAID OUR CONGRESS HAD NOT ONLY ACCEPTED THE QUESTIONNAIRE PROCEDURE BUT HAD ALSO DEMONSTRATED ITS GOOD FAITY BY MAKING BASICALLY HELPFUL PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PASSING THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION WITH A MINIMUM OF WRANGLING. THE ONUS FOR COOPERATION NOW FELL ON THE ROKG WHICH WOULD COME UNDER SHARP CRITICISM IF KIM DONG JO DID NOT COOPERATE. SPECIFICALLY, I STATED AND RESTATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT KIM DEAL HONESTLY WITH FACTUAL QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY PAY-
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MENTS TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OR SENATE AND THAT HE ANSWER OTHER QUESTIONS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER RATHER THAN DISMISSION THEM. I ADDED THAT NO ONE COULD OBJECT TO KIM' TRYING TO DEFEND HIMSELF AND HIS MOTIVES. IF KIM RESPONDED IN A HELPFUL SPIRIT, WE THOUGHT THE QUESTION OF "CLARIFICATION" WOULD PROVE RELATIVELY SIMPLE: IF HE TRIED TO BUCK THE QUESTIONNAIRE, IT COULD PROVE CONSIDERABLY

MORE DIFFICULT.

3. FONMIN DID NOT DISPUTE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ISSUE OR THE NEED TO WIND THE MATTER UP WELL BEFORE CONGRESS ADJOURNS. HE REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO DO ITS BEST TO ENCOURAGE "MEANINGFUL" RESPONSES FROM KIM DONG JO, BUT HE ALSO DESCRIBED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEMS IN ELICITING COOPERATION FROM KIM (PRIVATE CITIZEN, STRONG WILLED, RESENTFUL, DEFENSIVE, ETC.). HE PROMISED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD OBTAIN KIM'S DECISION AND ONCE IT HAD DONE SO, WOULD ACCEPT THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRANSMITTAL.

4. PARK PROBED GENTLY ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRES ASKING WHETHER THEY CONTAINED ANY "INSULTING LANGUAGE" OR ANY "EVIDENCE." I SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE BEST FOR HIM TO REACH HIS OWN CONCLUSIONS WHEN I DELIVERED THE QUESTIONNAIRES. I MUMBLED TO AVOID TALKING ABOUT EVIDENCE AND SAID THAT AS AN AMERICAN I FOUND NO INSULTING LANGUAGE. CERTAINLY NONE WAS INTENDED.

5. THE FONMIN KEPT ME A FEW MINUTES ALONE TO UNDERScore HIS DIFFICULTY IN DEALING WITH KIM DONG JO WHO WAS SO BITTER TOWARD THE FONMIN, THE PRIME MINISTER AND AMBASSADOR KIM YONG SHIK THAT HE WOULD NOT COMMUNICATE WITH ANY OF THEM. INSTEAD, THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN FORCED TO USE "OTHER CHANNELS" (WHICH I UNDERSTAND TO BE KCIA AND MOFA AMERICAN BUREAU CONFIDENTIAL

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DIRECTOR YU CHONG HA)

6. COMMENT: I FOUND THE FONMIN RELATIVELY COOPERATIVE ON THE "CLARIFICATION" ISSUE BEARING OUT INDICATIONS WE HAVE HAD FROM OTHER SOURCES. THE MAIN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IS THE TREACLE-LIKE PACE AT WHICH WE ARE PROCEEDING, BUT I THINK THE FONMIN GENUINELY UNDERSTANDS THAT AN EXCESSIVELY DRAWN OUT SCENARIO MAY BOOMERANG ON THE ROKG. I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO GIVE THIS IMPRESSION.
GLEYSTEN

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